

C.S. LEWIS'S THE LION, THE WITCH, AND THE WARDROBE IS A SILLY FAIRY TALE

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C.S. Lewis's fantasy, *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, made its appearance as a feature Hollywood movie on December 9, 2005, and took in \$187 million worldwide in the first ten days.

There is much hubbub about the movie in evangelical circles. R. Albert Mohler, Jr., president of Southern Baptist Seminary, is typical in his claim that Lewis's fiction "stands as a powerful story with clear allusions to the person and work of Christ, to the reality of human sin, to humanity's desperate need for redemption and to God's ultimate victory in Christ" ("Aslan Is on the Move," Baptist Press, Dec. 10).

I could not disagree more strongly. Though I have not seen the movie, I have read the book, and it is nothing more than a silly fairy tale.

The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe, one of seven stories called *The Chronicles of Narnia*, is about four children who enter a magical country called Narnia through a closet. It is perpetually winter in Narnia, because the land is under the spell of a witch. A prophecy predicted that two boys and two girls would come to the land and become the rightful kings and queens. The great lion Aslan, supposedly a Christ figure, dies and rises from the dead to make the defeat of the witch and the fulfillment of the prophecy possible.

What about the alleged Christian aspects of this story? At best, any biblical doctrine that is presented in Lewis's Narnia is vague and distorted and overlaid with heathen mythology. The defenders of Lewis's fiction argue that the Bible uses parables to present truth, but Lewis's fiction is filled with unscriptural things that one will never find in a biblical parable.

Christ's parables did not contain a mixture of truth and paganism, but Lewis's stories unblushingly intertwine a few vague biblical themes with pagan mythology: nymphs, fauns (part man and part goat), dwarfs, centaurs (part man and part horse), Dryads (tree-women), and Naiads (well-women). All of these creatures are depicted as serving Aslan. Lewis presents the deeply heretical idea of good magic. He calls Aslan's power "Deep Magic" and Aslan's father's power as "Emperor's Magic." He introduces the vile pagan god Bacchus and his orgies as a desirable thing that was part of Narnia's past before the White Witch worked her spell. He presents the myth of "Father Christmas" as if it were

innocent and wholesome. He teaches that Adam's first wife was not Eve but rather a woman named Lilith and that she was a witch.

As for the heart of the story, which is the death and resurrection of the lion Aslan, at best it is a corrupt depiction of Christ's salvation. Aslan dies and sheds his blood not to satisfy God's law but to satisfy the "Deep Power" and the White Witch.

This confusion is a reflection of Lewis's heretical stand on the atonement. He said, "The central Christian belief is that Christ's death has SOMEHOW put us right with God and given us a fresh start. Theories as to how it did this are another matter. ... Any theories we build up as to how Christ's death did all of this are, in my view, quite secondary..." (*Mere Christianity*, HarperSanFrancisco edition, 2001, pp. 54, 55, 56). This is heresy. God has revealed exactly what Christ did and what the atonement means. It is not a matter of theorizing or believing one "formula" over against another. The Bible says our salvation is a matter of a propitiation, a ransom, whereby our sins were washed away by Christ's bloody death, which was offered as a payment to satisfy God's holy Law.

Through Christ's blood we have eternal redemption. "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us" (Heb. 9:12).

This is not a theory or a formula. It is the Word of God, and if one does not like it or believe it, he cannot be saved.

In *Mere Christianity*, Lewis claims that "the Christ-life" is spread to men through baptism, belief, and the Lord's Supper. This is a false gospel of faith plus works. He says, "There are three things that spread the Christ-life to us: baptism, belief, and that mysterious action which different Christians call by different names--Holy Communion, the Mass, the Lord's Supper. ... I am not saying anything about which of these things is the most essential. My Methodist friend would like me to say more about belief and less (in proportion) about the other two. But I am not going into that" (*Mere Christianity*, p. 61). (Note that he includes the Catholic Mass in his list of the various names by which holy communion are known, failing to acknowledge to his readers that the Mass is an entirely different thing than the simple Lord's Supper of the New Testament.)

It is not a Methodist we should listen to but the Bible itself, and the Bible says that salvation is by the grace of Christ alone through faith in Christ alone without works, that works are important but they follow after salvation and are the product of salvation rather than the means of it. The difference between saying that salvation is by faith without works and that works follow and saying that salvation is by faith with works or faith plus works is the difference between a true gospel and a false one, the difference between heaven and hell. "Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his

faith is counted for righteousness” (Rom. 4:3-4). “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” (Eph. 2:8-10). “And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work” (Rom. 11:6).

I have read several of C.S. Lewis’s books and several biographies about him, and I have never seen a clear teaching on the new birth or a clear biblical testimony that he was born again. This should be cause for the deepest concern.

As for Aslan’s resurrection, Lewis calls it “more magic.”

Friends, I would urge you in the strongest way to beware of C.S. Lewis and of the deluded evangelical world that glorifies him.

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